

SDIC:

Systematic Development of Informed Consent

by Hans and Annemarie Bleiker

In this course you learn about "**Informed Consent**": the key to the phenomenal success of Implementation Geniuses.

What's SDIC all about?

What we try to do in all of our courses is: share with you what we have learned from 30+ years of R&D into the methods and tactics of **Implementation Geniuses**. Even though we do that in all of our various courses, we do it best in this course! **SDIC** is the management strategy that -- as far as we can tell -- Implementation Geniuses use. The **SDIC** management strategy is what's behind their astonishing ability to get even their opponents to "Grudgingly Go Along" with them. The **SDIC** course, therefore, **is the most important course we teach**.

Once you realize that Implementation Geniuses *really can* implement projects that others cannot, you're bound to ask yourself: "*What's the key to their phenomenal success?*"

For example:

- They *don't do more* public involvement . . .
 - In fact, they often do *less* . . .
 - More importantly: *they do it differently* . . .
- They develop a strange . . . complicated . . . arrangement with their opponents... especially with their fiercest opponents . . . that is neither an agreement nor a conventional disagreement.
 - We describe this arrangement as "*the Grudging Willingness of Opponents to (grudgingly) go along with a Course of Action they, actually, are Opposed to . . .*"
 - . . . we call it "*Informed Consent*" . . .

- Implementation Geniuses *systematically* develop Informed Consent.
- They use Citizen Participation strictly as a *tool* in their Consent-Building efforts.
 - They - unlike most other public officials - *never do Citizen Participation as "an End in Itself" . . . but only as "a Means to an End", . . . the "end" . . . or objective . . . being the **Informed Consent of their fiercest opponents.***

Working with Implementation Geniuses - primarily officials who have become Implementation Geniuses as a result of our SDIC/CPO training - demonstrates several amazing things:

- 1. The relationship between the professionals in your agency, the elected and/or appointed political decision-makers who make policy for your agency, and your various potentially affected interests . . . is *rarely* what people think it is, . . . and *always* has the potential for being very different from what it appears to be!
- 2. No matter how much of an "Over-My-Dead-Body" attitude your opponents have, . . . and, no matter what those opponents' motive is, . . . and, no matter how impossible it looks, . . . you probably *can* develop their Informed Consent . . . The possibility *is* there . . . provided you work for a legitimate organization . . . and your proposal is legitimate.
- 3. *Democratic decision-making . . . the idea of participatory "self-governance" . . . is much more difficult than people realize.*
 - The people who invented Democracy - the Greeks of 2,500 years ago - failed utterly at making Democracy work and gave up on it. They concluded that it couldn't work! . . .
 - What few attempts have been made at Democracy since have not worked particularly well.
 - To top it off, the kind of Democracy we are trying in the United States is the most daring -- and probably the most brilliantly conceived, but also the most unworkable -- ever invented. Thomas Jefferson and his cohorts who came up with the ground-rules for *this* Democracy built it around *the rights of the individual . . . not* around the rights of society, or the group, or the majority . . . as every other society has always done.

- The resulting "Jeffersonian" Democracy is designed to give individuals . . . and other special interests . . . tremendous clout . . . including the clout to monkey-wrench, stop, derail, stall, stymie, torpedo, veto . . . governmental proposals.
 - *No other governmental system ever designed anywhere . . . in the whole history of mankind . . . gives "Over-My-Dead-Body" opponents the kind of negative clout that Jeffersonian Democracy gives them . . . !!!*
 - That is why public agencies in the US have a much greater need for Consent-Building skills than their counterparts in other countries, . . . all those countries where "the group" prevails over the individual.
- **4. Informed Consent is not natural . . . not with interests who will be hurt by your proposal . . . And, you will, with virtually every proposal you make, be forced to hurt someone . . . because it's a fact of life *that virtually every solution to a complex problem will hurt some interests.***
 - *Opposition, even "Over-My-Dead-Body" opposition, is a far more natural response* when your proposal threatens to offend someone's values, . . . than agreement, consensus, or even "grudging" consent . . . Unless you design Informed Consent, . . . build Informed Consent, . . . engineer Informed Consent, . . . it won't be there when you come out with your proposal.
- **5. When the professionals in an agency develop for their political decision-makers -- and deliver to them -- a technical proposal, *without* also developing and delivering INformed Consent, *they virtually guarantee political grid-lock . . . and indecision . . .***
- **6. On the other hand, . . . *Implementation Geniuses get the same political decision-makers to make decisions, . . . even difficult, painful, unpopular decisions . . .***
- **7. One reason their political decision-makers *are* able and willing to bite the bullet appears to be the effect Implementation Geniuses have on the "political climate" surrounding their proposal:**
 - Implementation Geniuses create *an informed public.*
 - That informed public engages in *an informed public debate.*

- That, in turn, creates *an informed political debate*.
- And, that - in turn - leads to *informed political decisions*.
- **8. Ordinary, humble technical or professional public-sector professionals** -- who are dedicated to their mission, and who have the courage to do things differently from the way they're done by most of their colleagues - *can be phenomenally effective . . . amazingly influential, . . . stunningly successful . . . !*

The SDIC course helps you discover the larger decision-making framework that you fit into as a professional working in a Jeffersonian Democracy. It gives you a big enough perspective where "politics" no longer is a four-letter word, and no longer is synonymous with "irrational" and "frustration". From that bigger and better perspective, you discover that your role as a technical expert doesn't have to be one of near-irrelevance in the political decision-making process . . . You discover that the potential exists for you to have much greater influence over political decision-making than you ever thought . . . without becoming a political player yourself . . . and, without manipulating the publics or the political decision-makers . . .

SDIC topics include:

- Why, and how proposals are *torpedoed*.
- Why technical and scientific professionals responsible for public-sector missions are *only as effective as they are persuasive* . . .
- The "Technical Fallacy: why no amount of *scientific analysis* can resolve *values conflicts* . . .
- How scientific analysis needs to mesh with *Systematic Consent-Building* if it is to influence political debate and - thereby - political decisions . . .
- *Why most public meetings and Advisory Committees used by most public agencies are somewhere between useless and counter-productive.*
- *Why pleasing everyone is neither possible nor necessary* . . .

- How you can . . how you must . . . satisfy this society's concepts *of Fairness, Rights, Freedoms, Liberties, and Responsibilities*. You'll see how you can incorporate these concepts into your day-to-day project planning processes.
- Why it is more difficult, and more important, for public officials in this country to develop Informed Consent than in any other country. . . i.e. How and why Thomas Jefferson's idea of trying to create a society where individual values are (relatively) sovereign has resulted in:
 - a government that is fundamentally different from all other governments ever created anywhere . . .
 - a government that is primarily responsible with protecting the rights of the individual. . .
 - a government that has lots of responsibilities but relatively little clout . . .
 - a government that was designed - by Jefferson - to have to develop its public's consent over, and over . . . and over . . . if it is to get anything accomplished . . .
- *The role values play* - i.e. people's likes, dislikes, hopes, dreams, fears, aspirations, etc. - i.e. the roles values play:
 - in building Informed Consent
 - and in creating "Over-My-Dead-Body" attitudes . . . including potentially violent "Extremists".

Who can benefit from it?

Public officials with responsibility for important -- but difficult-to-implement -- projects, programs, regulations, and missions are the most obvious beneficiaries of this training. **Engineers, scientists, systems analysts, managers, administrators, and other hired professionals in public agencies benefit most** because it's their professional work -- and their careers -- that are wasted when their recommendations are torpedoed. However, elected and politically appointed decision-makers can also use **SDIC**. They suffer many of the same frustrations as do the professionals.

Although the R&D that went into the development of **SDIC** was carried out primarily in the public sector, private-sector managers whose proposals are vulnerable to vetoes can also use SDIC to raise their batting averages.

What are the benefits of learning SDIC?

There is **GOOD News** and **BAD News**:

- the **BAD News**: The **SDIC** management strategy is neither easy to learn nor is it easy to use.
- the **GOOD News**: It *is* learnable. In fact, you can learn the basics of it in just a few days, (It took us 30+ years to learn it . . .) and it is do-able. And, once you start using it, you become more and more effective. *You too will become an "Implementation Genius".*

"Makes more sense than anything else I've heard of in all my years of education and life-experiences. If I use even half of what I've learned in this course, I will be much more successful in my work as well as with the rest of my life." -Paula Schmitt diel, Remedial Project Manager, US Environmental Protection Agency, Superfund; Denver, CO

What's in this Course?

Experienced administrators who attend this course often tell us that it has been one of **the most empowering, enlightening, valuable, useful . . . learning experiences** they've ever been exposed to.

The main topics include:

- the VETO phenomenon: why -- and how -- even a single, small, but determined opposing minority or special interest can torpedo a project, . . .
- SEACA (or Informed Consent), the solution to the VETO problem, . . .
- Values: their structure, and their pivotal role in Consent-Building, . . .
- 60 Fundamental Principles and 15 Objectives of Consent-Building, . . .

- the six most common seriously damaging Errors in Consent-Building, and
- the PAI-Matrix: a method for simplifying even a very complex mix of special interests into a manageable system.